

Message Text

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OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /114 W
-----067890 182218Z /15

R 111438Z JUL 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6360
INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASVK BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USUN NEW YORK 507
USMISSION PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KIGALI 1104

NAIROBI ALSO FOR REDSO/EA

PASS ALSO AID, ICA AND PEACE CORPS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAG: PDEV, CH, KN, RW
SUBJECT: TRENDS IN RWANDA - JUNE 1978: CLOSER FRIENDSHIP WITH
CHINA AND NORTH KOREA

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA LED A LARGE
DELEGATION ON VISIT TO PRC AND DPRK JUNE 7-17.
TRIP WAS UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS IN TERMS OF ARRANGE-
MENTS AND PERSONAL SATISFACTION, AND RWANDANS ALSO
OBTAINED SOME NEW AID COMMITMENTS FROM HOSTS.
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RWANDAN WESTERN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ORIENTATION
PRESUMABLY REMAINS, BUT POLICIES OF "OUVERTURE" AND NON-
ALIGNMENT GAINED CREDIBILITY FROM THIS SUCCESS. FOR A COUNTRY
OF LITTLE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE IT WAS A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW GREAT
POWERS AND EUROPEAN DONOR COUNTRIES THAT RWANDAN FRIENDSHIP
CANNOT BE FOREVER TAKEN FOR GRANTED. END SUMMARY.

2. CHINESE AND NORTH KOREANS ARE PERFECT HOSTS. HARDLY UNPACKED FROM THE FRANCO-AFRICAN SUMMIT, PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA ACCEPTED PRC INVITATION TO VISIT CHINA DEPARTING JUNE 7 AT HEAD OF LARGEST VISITING DELEGATION IN RWANDAN HISTORY -- 80 PLUS, INCLUDING MRS. HABYARIMANA, FIVE CABINET MINISTERS AND SO ON DOWN TO LOCAL MRND LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT PRESS. HABYARIMANA JOKINGLY EXPLAINED STRENGTH AND SIZE OF DELEGATION BY SAYING: "CHINA SENT US A BIG PLANE SO WE COULDN'T JUST GO WITH A DELEGATION OF FIVE."

CHINESE AND NORTH KOREANS PROVIDED RED CARPET TREATMENT. BILATERAL TALKS AND VISITS TO TRADITIONAL SPOTS TOOK PLACE IN FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE SYMBOLIZED BY EXCEEDINGLY WARM TOASTS AT STATE DINNERS. HOSTS SHOWED THEY CARED: CHINESE PERFORMED TRADITIONAL RWANDAN INTORE DANCES (REPORTEDLY IN BLACCFACE*) AND KOREAN SCHOOL-CHILDREN WELCOMED VISITORS WITH MRND SONS IN KINYARWANDA. RWANDANS CLEARLY GOT PLEASURE FROM TRIP, AND THEY DID NOT RETURN HOME EMPTYHANDED EITHER. CHINESE, WHO EARLIER CONSTRUCTED EXCELLENT KIGALI-RUSUMO ROAD AND COMPLETED AND ENLARGED TAIWAN-INITIATED SUGAR REFINERY AND RICE CULTIVATION PROJECT, PROMISED TO BUILD PREVIOUSLY-PROMISED CEMENT FACTORY BY END OF 1979, AND AGREED TO FINANCE NEW RICE PROJECT AND CONSTRUCTION OF CERAMICS FACTORY. NEW COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT TO SUCCEED EXPIRING 1972 ACCORD ALSO WAS SIGNED. DISCUSSIONS ALSO

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TOUCHED POSSIBLE PRC MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO RWANDA; LARGE, HIGH-RANKING CHINESE MILITARY TEAM ARRIVED FOR TALKS IN KIGALI AS JULY BEGAN. NO DETAILS ARE YET AVAILABLE ON ANY OF NEW PROJECTS.

DPRK AID COMMITMENTS THUS FAR INCLUDE "YOUTH PALACE" NEAR KIGALI PLAGUED WITH CONSTRUCTION DELAYS, PLUS PROMISED 200 HECTARE RICE PROJECT. THEY HAVE ALSO PROVIDED SOUND/CINEMA VEHICLES TO MRND AND ORINFOR (GOVERNMENT RADIO AND PRESS AGENCY), HABYARIMANA BUTTONS FOR MRND MILITANTS, AND MASS MOVEMENT INSTRUCTION AND ATHLETIC COACHING THROUGH YOUTH MINISTRY. RWANDANS SAY KOREANS PROMISED TO SPEED COMPLETION OF YOUTH PALACE, PLUS UNDERTAKE 1000 HECTARE IRRIGATION PROJECT AND FINANCING OF CORN OIL PLANT. UMBRELLA FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT SIGNED IN PYONGYANG TOO, SUCCEEDING ONE IN FORCE SINCE 1974. ONE SMALL INDICATION THAT BARGAINING WITH KOREANS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN EASY IS RWANDAN AGREEMENT TO PAY EXPENSIVE TRANSPORT FROM MOMBASA TO KIGALI OF CEMENT NEEDED FOR COMPLETION OF YOUTH PALACE.

3. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ASIAN COMMUNISTS AND WHERE THEY FIT IN.

RWANDA PLAYS MARGINAL ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, BUT WOULD LIKE TO BE TAKEN MORE SERIOUSLY. THUS GOR IS GRATEFUL FOR SIGNS OF ATTENTION FROM ANY QUARTER. POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT AND OF "OUVERTURE" TO FRIENDLY RELATIONS MEANS RWANDANS ARE POSITIVE TO JUST ABOUT ANY COUNTRY WILLING TO PROVIDE AID IN WAYS THEY CONSIDER IMPORTANT. PRC AID TO RWANDA IS SURPASSED BY ONLY A FEW EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION DONORS, AND RWANDANS ATTACH GREAT VALUE TO FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH CHINA. TERMS OF AID NOT KNOWN, BUT REPAYMENT INCLUDES OBLIGATION TO PURCHASE CHINESE GOODS -- \$3.68 MILLION IN 1976, FOR EXAMPLE (LATEST FIGURES AVAILABLE), AGAINST ALMOST NO RWANDAN EXPORTS TO PRC. CONFIDENTIAL

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KOREAN CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT IS MORE DOUBTFUL, AND RWANDAN ATTACHMENT TO DPRK IS MORE SUPERFICIAL AND WARY. KOREAN AID PROJECTS HAVE NOT HAD SMOOTH ROAD -- YOUTH PALACE IS TWO YEARS BEHIND SCHEDULE; ATHLETIC COACHING AND MASS MOVEMENT INSTRUCTION SOMETIMES ENCOUNTER RWANDAN HESITANCY OVER POLITICAL ORIENTATION -- BUT RWANDANS DELIVER THE ONE CLEAR POLITICAL DEBT DEMANDED BY NORTH KOREANS: SUPPORT FOR KOREAN REUNIFICATION ON DPRK TERMS.

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 111438Z JUL 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6361

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KIGALI 1104

CHINESE APPARENTLY HAVE NO SUCH NARROWLY DEFINED OBJECTIVE WITH RWANDA. BUT THEIR PRESENCE IS OF SYMBOLIC VALUE TO RWANDA BEYOND THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. FRIENDSHIP WITH PRCE IMPROVES GOR NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS AND OFFERS LEVERAGE DEALING WITH EITHER SOVIETS OR WESTERN POWERS. HABYARIMANA AND FONMIN NSEKALJE LIKE TO TAKE POX-ON-BOTH-YOUR-HOUSES APPROACH ON SOME INTERNATIONAL ISSUES; E.G., HABYARIMANA TOAST IN PEKING, APPEALING "TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AND ESPECIALLY TO SUPER POWERS, TO STOP THEIR RIVALRY WHICH IS LEADING TO MULTIPLICATION OF TENSION SPOTS IN WORLD, ESPECIALLY IN OUR AFRICA." HOW SIGNIFICANT THE PRC-RWANDA CONNECTION CAN BECOME REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IT CAN BE IMPORTANT, FOR EXAMPLE, AS COUNTERPOISE TO RUSSIAN-CUBAN INFLUENCE RWANDANS PERCEIVE GAINING IN BURUNDI.
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4. WILL THE SOVIETS RISE TO THE BAIT?

RWANDANS WERE TREATED IN PEKING TO DEMONSTRATION OF SOVIET-CHINESE BITTER FEELING, WHEN RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR AND SEVERAL OTHER EASTERN EUROPEANS WALKED OUT OF BANQUET IN HABYARIMANA'S HONOR BECAUSE OF OBJECTIONS TO TENG HSIAO-PING TOAST REMARKS: "THE SUPERPOWER LATELY COME LOOKING TO SOW DISCORD EVERYWHERE IN AFRICA HAS CONTINUALLY PROVOKED CONFLICTS, DISPATCHED INCREASING NUMBERS OF MERCENAIRES, AND LIT THE FIRES OF WAR ALL OVER... RECENTLY, SHE HAS ONCE MORE INCITED MERCENARIES TO PERPETRATE A NEW INVASION OF ZAIRE, EVEN WHILE THE FLAMES OF WAR SHE HAD IGNITED CONTINUE TO BLAZE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA." RWANDAN PRESS COVERING VISIT MADE NO MENTION OF THIS INCIDENT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS BROADCAST BY INTERNATIONAL PRESS AGENCIES. (NORTH KOREA, INCIDENTALLY, REFRAINED FROM INFLAMMATORY ANTI-US AND ANTI-WESTERN RHETORIC WITH RWANDANS.)

SOVIET UNION IS ONLY OTHER COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT BESIDES PRC AND DPRK WITH RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN KIGALI. IN RECENT YEARS THEIR EMBASSY, THOUGH RELATIVELY

LARGE, HAS BEEN SOMNOLENT, AND SOVIET AID ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO LONG-TERM SCHOLARSHIPS TO USSR AND A HANDFUL OF DOCTORS AND SCIENCE AND MATH TEACHERS IN RWANDA. ON JUNE 7, BEFORE FLYING OFF TO PEKING, HABYARIMANA ACCEPTED CREDENTIALS OF NEW SOVIET AMBASSADOR GUENNADY RYKOV, A DYNAMIC, POLISHED CONTRAST TO HIS PREDECESSOR. GOR OFFICIALS ENCOURAGE NOTION THAT ARRIVAL OF RYKOV SIGNALS RUSSIAN INTEREST IN PUTTING MORE EFFORT INTO RELATIONS WITH RWANDA, BUT RYKOV HIMSELF SAYS HIS COUNTRY NOT PREPARED TO SPEND LARGE AMOUNTS ON AID TO RWANDA. IF HE IS AS VIGOROUS AS BILLED THAT ALONE MIGHT IMPROVE SOVIET IMAGE IN RWANDA, BUT WE MUST AWAIT FURTHER EVIDENCE BEFORE JUDGING THAT
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USSR PLANS MUCH MORE ACTIVE PRESENCE HERE REQUIRING MORE RESOURCES.

5. IS THERE A ROLE FOR RWANDA IN THE EAST-WEST GAME?

NO DOUBT ONE KEY REASON WHY HABYARIMANA VISITED PRC AND DPRK IS THAT THEY INVITED HIM--NO MASTER PLAN BEYOND THAT. BUT THE VISIBLE FRUIT OF RWANDA'S "OVERTURE" POLICY SHOULD SERVE HIM WELL BOTH DOMESTICALLY

AND WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES--PERHAPS EVEN WITH INDUSTRIALIZED DONORS.

HE WAS SEEN WITH HUA KUO-FENG AND KIM IL SUNG AND SPOKE WITH THEM AS AN EQUAL, AT LEAST IN PROTOCOL TERMS. LITTLE RWANDA BENEFITS FROM NEITHER STRATEGIC LOCATION NOR STRATEGIC RESOURCES, AND IT MUST BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY LITTLE LEVERAGE IT IS OFFERED. IF CHINA AND NORTH KOREA TAKE THE COUNTRY SERIOUSLY ENOUGH TO ENTERTAIN THE CHIEF OF STATE AND PROVIDE ECONOMIC AID--AND THEY ARE POOR COUNTRIES THEMSELVES--PERHAPS THE RICH COUNTRIES CAN BE PERSUADED TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE.

BUT THE GOR HAS LITTLE MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE WITH EAST-WEST COMPETITION, AND THEIR ECONOMIC LOT IS DECISIVELY TIED IN WITH WESTERN SOURCES OF AID, TRADE, TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING. UNTIL NOW THEIR MAIN METHOD OF EXERCISING LEVERAGE FROM EAST-WEST COMPETITION IS TO "OPEN THE EYES" OF WESTERN GOVERNMENTS TO THE SOVIET AND CUBAN TREAT IN AFRICA, ARGUING THAT MORE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID IS NEEDED TO STAND UP TO THEIR GROWING INFLUENCE. THEY ARGUE THAT SHABA II AND THE TINY CUBAN DIPLOMATIC BEACHHEAD IN BURUNDI ARE LATEST SIGNS OF CONTINUING KIND--THAT THE TIDE IS RUNNING WITH THE COMMUNISTS THESE DAYS.

THE CHINESE, AND EVEN THE NORTH KOREANS, SEEM TO PROVIDE A SPECIAL CHANCE FOR RWANDA TO CARVE OUT A POSITION OF ITS OWN WITHOUT ALIENATING EAST OR WEST. RWANDA'S ATTACHING GREAT

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IMPORTANCE TO APPARENT LIBERALITY OF CHINESE (AND KOREAN) HOSTS, WHO SEEM TO ATTACH FEW STRINGS TO THEIR LARGESSE. (IN FACT AID TERMS ARE NOT SO LIBERAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL BAGGAGE CONSIDERABLE, BUT AT THIS STAGE SUCH OBSERVATIONS FAR LESS APPARENT TO RWANDAN LEADERS THAN TO US.) RECAPTURING INITIATIVE FOR WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE MORE FORTHCOMING RESPONSES TO GOR ECONOMIC AND SECURITY AID DESIRES. OTHERWISE PRC AND DPRK INFLUENCE LIKELY TO BE CONSOLIDATED IF THEY REMAIN INTERESTED ENOUGH TO CAPITALIZE ON THEIR PRESENT OPENING IN RWANDA. CRIGLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780295-0423
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From: KIGALI
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2054871
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRENDS IN RWANDA - JUNE 1978: CLOSER FRIENDSHIP WITH CHINA AND NORTH KOREA
TAGS: PDEV, PEPR, CH, KN, RW
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e7fece77-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014